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HIV AND DEVELOPMENT

The proposed joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme ON HIV/AIDS

Report of the Administrator

I. OBJECTIVE

1. The present report is in response to Executive Board decision 94/5 of 18 February 1994. The information is intended to assist the Board in its deliberations on the proposed joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS to be considered by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994 (27 June-29 July 1994).

II. DISCUSSION

2. The World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board considered document EB93/INF.DOC./5 at its meeting in January 1994. The proposals contained therein were prepared by the HIV/AIDS Inter-Agency Working Group comprising representatives from the six organizations cited in World Health Association (WHA) resolution WHA46.37 (1993) (WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)). The WHO Executive Board decided in its resolution EB93.R5 to recommend the further development and establishment of a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS and to invite UNDP, along with the other five agencies, to become co-sponsors in accordance with the consensus option contained in that document.

3. UNDP is committed to increasing the effectiveness of the response of the United Nations system to the HIV epidemic. It is actively participating in the Inter-Agency Working Group mentioned above, which is seeking to develop further

a consensus option for presentation to the 1994 session of the Economic and Social Council, in the WHO Task Force on HIV/AIDS Coordination and in the United Nations Inter-Agency Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS.

4. The pressing challenge facing the United Nations system is how best to mobilize its resources to address this difficult challenge, still mainly a silent crisis yet already a chronic condition in many parts of the world. The HIV epidemic has grave implications not only for human development but also for human peace and security, human rights and national and international governance.

5. These implications are still to be widely understood and taken into account. They necessitate a comprehensive, multidimensional response at global and country levels. The United Nations system, Governments, bilateral assistance agencies, foundations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and communities throughout the world are all part of this response. The broad objective of a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme is to enhance the capacity of the United Nations system to contribute to this overall response in an effective, coordinated and accountable manner.

6. The consensus option proposes, at the global level, to centralize the advocacy and leadership functions, strategic planning, policy development and technical guidance to the United Nations system in a new inter-agency secretariat.

7. The proposed inter-agency secretariat would have as its objectives: (a) to provide global leadership in response to the epidemic; (b) to achieve and promote global consensus on policy and programmatic approaches; (c) to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to monitor trends and lessons learned and to ensure that appropriate and effective policies and strategies are put into operation at the country level; (d) to strengthen the capacity of Governments to draw up comprehensive national strategies through an ongoing planning process involving all partners and to coordinate and implement effective HIV/AIDS activities at the country level; (e) to promote broad-based political and social mobilization to prevent and control HIV/AIDS within countries, ensuring that national responses involve a wide range of sectors and institutions; and (f) to advocate greater political commitment in responding to the epidemic at global and country levels, including the mobilization and allocation of adequate resources to HIV/AIDS-related activities.

8. It is under discussion whether the proposed Secretariat would have sole responsibility for achieving some or all of the objectives outlined or whether it should work towards mobilizing the entire United Nations system as the prime means of accomplishing them. A related issue concerns the location of staff in the new programme, in particular the balance among the secretariat, co-sponsoring and other agencies, funds and programmes.

9. Under the consensus option outlined in WHO document EB93/INF.DOC./5, the Secretariat would plan and execute most global activities. Individual co-sponsors could carry out global, regional or intercountry HIV-specific activities with their traditional partners and in areas where they had particular expertise (para. 50). Individual co-sponsors would have

responsibility for support to their country offices and other parts of their organizations and for ensuring that throughout each organization HIV-related matters are integrated into the broader operational activities (para. 48).

10. UNDP would thus need both to maintain and strengthen an in-house programme support and mainstreaming capacity that would provide support to Resident Representatives and country offices and other units within the policy framework and technical guidelines developed by the new secretariat. Whether or not the UNDP headquarters programme would carry out any other activities with its traditional partners or within areas of particular expertise would need to be discussed with the new secretariat. Any such activities would be included in the overall work programme of the new programme.

11. The most important function of the proposed new programme would be to strengthen national capacity to plan, coordinate, implement and monitor the overall response to HIV/AIDS; by providing the best possible advice on the nature and scope of the national response to HIV/AIDS; by facilitating the broad-based planning process; by helping to achieve the objectives and targets set by Governments for their national HIV/AIDS programmes; and by assisting with resource mobilization.

12. Therefore, it would be in the interest of the new programme to ensure that United Nations system funds, programmes and specialized agencies strengthen their capacity to provide policy and technical support and advice, at the request of Governments. UNDP can facilitate this through, inter alia, the continuing use of TSS-1 funds in this area.

13. At the country level, in keeping with General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 47/199, the resources of the United Nations system will be marshalled through the Resident Coordinator (see WHO document EB93/INF.DOC./5, para. 61).

14. The chairperson of the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS at the Country Level and the Programme Country Staff Person will report functionally to the secretariat through the Resident Coordinator, who will be the point of contact for the secretariat of the joint and co-sponsored programme at the country level.

15. Thus it is envisaged that UNDP will continue to have a critical role to play in strengthening and supporting the role of the Resident Coordinators in developing integrated, multidimensional and effective United Nations system support to national HIV/AIDS programmes.

16. It is also planned that the Resident Representatives will continue to carry out their existing functions as outlined in the statement made to the Economic and Social Council at its high-level segment on 13 July 1992. Under the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1992 between WHO and UNDP, UNDP has joint responsibility for strengthening national capacity to develop multidimensional strategic plans; to build national consensus on policies and approaches; to develop effective and sustainable broad-based programmes; to monitor and evaluate their impact; and to mobilize adequate resources, both national and external, for their implementation.

7. In order to strengthen UNDP capacity to assist in this way, a network of HIV and Development national professional officers was endorsed by the February Executive Board in its decision 94/5, provisional on the review of the terms of reference and location by the HIV/AIDS Inter-Agency Working Group. At its March meeting, the Inter-Agency Working Group issued the following statement:

> "The HIV/AIDS Inter-Agency Working Group fully supports the intention of UNDP to strengthen its capacity at country level to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Furthermore, the group recognizes the role of the Resident Coordinator in ensuring coordination of the United Nations system, as described in 47/199.
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> "The group is in the process of elaborating further a variety of issues related to the eventual establishment of a United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS, including the staffing situation at country level. In view of the ongoing nature of these discussions, it is not possible at this point for the group to comment on the relationship of the posts to any long-term staffing strategy fully compatible with the establishment of a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS.
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> "The group considers that, in so far as paragraphs a-d in the terms of reference relate to the support of the work of the UNDP representative, the establishment and location of these posts should be decided upon by UNDP.
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> "Until a longer-term staffing strategy for the United Nations programme on AIDS is developed, these posts could assist the United Nations system in its efforts to improve HIV/AIDS-related coordination and collaboration, where there is consensus within the United Nations theme group on HIV/AIDS that this person should have these functions.
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> "The terms of reference for the posts should be modified to take into account the above recommendations."

18. UNDP restates its firm assurance to the Executive Board that any UNDP activity now and in the future will be fully integrated with, complementary to, and non-duplicative of existing activities of other United Nations agencies in this field and fully compatible with a joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS, whose establishment is proposed for 1 January 1996.

III. DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

19. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Authorize the Administrator to:

(a) Accord high priority to strengthening national capacity to respond to the HIV epidemic in an effective and multidimensional manner;

(b) Recruit the HIV and Development national professional officers for the biennium 1994-1995;

(c) Encourage UNDP to be a co-sponsor of the proposed joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS;

2. Encourage the Administrator to continue to allocate human and financial resources in support of an effective UNDP contribution to the further development and establishment of the joint and co-sponsored United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS.